

IN THE ABSTRACT

Please amend the ABSTRACT as follows:

--A method for forming an oxide layer ~~steam-oxidation-process~~ which provides uniform coverage of oxygen radicals across a surface of a substrate to enhance the oxidation rate and form a uniform layer of SiO₂. The method for forming an oxide layer ~~steam oxidation-process~~ provides the heat and oxygen radicals for SiO₂ formation through the combustion of a process flame. The process flame can be fueled by a combination of H₂ and O₂ process gases. The process flame can include a plurality of process flames directed substantially perpendicular to the target substrate to provide uniform heating of the substrate and a uniform deposition of oxygen radicals across the surface of the substrate to enhance the formation of an oxidation layer.--